

## National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Scouting motto “Be Prepared” rings truer than ever. One aspect of preparation is situational awareness. The Comp Alliance Risk Management team promotes a positive safety culture, emphasizing situational awareness and ensuring the safe completion of all work tasks.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates every September as National Preparedness Month, encouraging all Americans to prepare for emergencies and disasters. New York State municipalities can reinforce this message by reviewing their in-house emergency response plans, which address natural disasters, chemical spills, emergency events, public health emergencies, and other crises.

- Focus on updating contact information and building plans
- Conduct regular drills to test and refine the plan
- Incorporate feedback from exercises and incidents
- Ensure clear communication protocols are in place
- Perform a risk assessment to identify new or emerging threats
- Provide training for all relevant personnel to improve preparedness and compliance

The Scouting motto, “Be Prepared,” means a Scout must always be ready in mind and body to do their duty and face any situation. Similarly, our risk management team advocates for employee situational awareness as a foundation for good decision-making. Situational awareness consists of three levels. The first level, perception, involves gathering information about one’s environment. Next is comprehension, which is the ability to understand the meaning of the information gathered. The final level, projection, entails predicting what might happen next. For municipal operations, this means identifying what is happening around you at any given time and making sensible decisions based on this knowledge.

Consider the volume of work injuries that could have been prevented with better employee awareness. This attention can prevent countless injuries, and even fatalities, from occurring in the workplace. It is a simple concept that works, but needs to be practiced constantly.